

CHAPTER - VI
DEMOCRATIC
DECENTRALIZATION,
DEVELOPMENT AND
EMPOWERMENT:
MURSHIDABAD DISTRICT
SCENARIO

DEMOCRATIC DECENTRALISATION AND EMPOWERMENT :- MURSHIDABAD DISTRICT SCENARIO

Profile of the District :

History of Murshidabad District in Brief :

The district derives the name from the town Murshidabad, where the provincial revenue head quarters of Bengal under Murshid Kuli Khan, the *Dewan*, was shifted from Dhaka in 1704 A.D. Murshidabad was the town where from the British Empire ascended in India.

This district has a very rich history. It is even believed that Alexander retreated here from further invasion into Ganga Valley. In the Seventh century, Karnasuvarna – a city of the district was the royal seat of a powerful king of Bengal—Sasanka.

Sasanka became the King of Gour with his capital at Karnasuvarna, sometimes about 606 A.D. In about 638 A.D Chinese traveller Hiuen-Tsang, came to Bengal, shortly after the death of Sasanka. In the writings of Hiuen-Tsang Karnasuvarna was an important centre of learning. The Kingdom was shortly handed over to Bhaskara Varmana, the hostile King of Kamrupa. The early part of the Eleventh century, is commemorated by the excavation of the large Sagar Dighi Water Tank by King Mahipala.

Prince Mohammed Azim-ud-Din took the charge of the govt. of Bengal in November , 1697. In December, 1700 Murshid Kuli Khan, the new *Dewan* came to Bengal. He was the founder of an independent provincial dynasty of Bengal. Murshid Kuli Khan died on 30th June, 1727. His son, Suja-ud-Din Mohammed Khan, succeeded him. He also died on 13th March, 1739. His son sarfaraz ascended the *Masnad* (Throne) of Bengal. But Alibardi Khan, an Arab by descent, ascended the *Masnad* in April, 1740. After his death

his grandson Siraz-ud-Doulla came to the throne of Bengal and wanted to drive the Britishers out of the country. Siraz faced several encounters with British army before the final battle of Palasi on 23rd June, 1757, where he was defeated by Lord Clive.

Physical Aspects :

The district is a triangular tract of country, the apex being situated at North-Western extremity. On its North, district Malda, Bangladesh is in East separated by the River Ganga. On the South lie the districts Burdwan and Nadia. West of the district is surrounded by the Santhal Parganas and Birbhoom district. On land no barrier among these districts are available other than the flowing River Ganga. The River Padma has been causing heavy damage to the villages under Akherigunge, Charkuthibari and Kharibona G.P. For the last ten years this river erased many villages completely including major govt. buildings, schools and personal properties were washed out by the surging waters before the eyes of helpless onlookers.

Geographical Aspect :

The district Murshidabad lies between the latitude 23°43'30" and 24°50'20" in the northern hemisphere. The eastern most extremity of the district is marked by 88°46'00" east longitude while the western most extremity by 87°49'17". Temperature varies between 11.6°C – 36°C. Rainfall recorded in 1998 is 1593.10mm. The river Bhagirathi flowing from north to south dividing almost two equal portion of the district, eastern portion is locally known as "Bagri Anchal" while west is "Rarh Anchal" having the surface high and undulating, hard clay soil with drier climate, but the "Bagri" area is low lying and aluvial with a humid climate having a fertile soil. The Farakka Barage though has its important impact on Indian context and international as well, but the

construction of this barage has till date kept more than 10,000 hectares of land drowned in this district.

Area and Population :

Murshidabad district is divided in five sub-divisions: Lalbagh, Sadar, Kandi, Domkal and Jangipur, having 26 Blocks, and 25 police stations. Area covers 5449.12 sq. km. Population 4740149 (1991 census). Sex ratio – male : female is 51.46 % : 48.54%. Density of population is 797 per sq.Km. Murshidabad is the only Muslim dominated district in West Bengal consisting of more than 59% Muslim population. Major crops are Rice, Jute, Sugar cane, Oil seeds and Potato. Inhabited villages are 1939. Major towns are Behrampur, Lalbagh, Lalgola, Murshidabad, Jangipur, Beldanga, Farakka, Kandi, Salar etc. This district has 1613 Kms of surfaced road and 1908 Km is unsurfaced. Number of post office is 541 in this district. {Report,1996}

Education :

Literacy rate of this district as per 1991 census is 38.28%, male covers 46.42% and female 29.59%. Murshidabad has 2,799 primary schools, 161 junior high school, 245 high school, 28 high madrasa, 77 higher secondary school and has 1300 non formal education centre. Libraries are 157 in number, among them rural 147, sub-division – 09 and District Library is 01. This district has Degree College (gen) – 19, Degree Engineering College – 01, Degree Textile College – 01, I.T.I.-01, Polytechnique College – 01, BT College- 02, B.Ed. College – 01, B.PEd. College – 01 and one more Polytechnique College is likely to add the number.

Industry and Commerce :

Having no such industry, Beedi factories got a prominent place in industry. Manufacturing of beedi which may generally be called a crude cigarette made of Tendu leaf and Tobacco rolled into the shape of a tiny pencil. In West Bengal, Murshidabad tops the list among the beedi manufacturing districts. It is found well over 3 lakh people engaged in this trade including child and women. It is found that 80% is of women. More than 30 crore pieces of beedi is the production of this district per day.

Murshidabad had once been one of the best silk manufacturing centres in the world. From the middle of the 18th century the silk industry in Bengal began to loose its importance, and also decaying its ancestral heritage on the silk production.

Mostly people are dependent on agriculture, mainly as a small farmer and casual agricultural labour. A few Rice Mills and Rice puffing machines are also functioning well in their business. This district has more than 250 Banks (branch), and major co-operatives. Bank branches per lakh people is 153.87, Bank deposit per capita is Rs.1477 and credit per capita is Rs. 404 where credit to agriculture is Rs.89 and industry is Rs. 75 per capita. Value of agricultural product is Rs.1883. Village electrified – 93.43%. Total percentage of main workers is 30.05 in which male is 50.99 and female is 07.86. Total percentage of marginal workers is 1.46 in which male is 0.50 and female is 2.47. In the case of non-worker the rate is quite high as 68.49 in which male is 48.51 and 89.67 percent. Particularly women in district are mostly (90%) non-workers.

Table :- 6.1

Profile Comparison : Murshidabad, West Bengal and India

Description	Murshidabad	West Bengal	India
Area in Sq. Km.	5324.00	88752.00	3065027.00
Population	4,744,149	68,077,965	83,8583988
Male—	2,439,342	35,510,633	435,216358
Female--	2,300,809	32,567332	403,367,630
Density of Population	890	767	273
Sex ratio per 1000 males	943	917	894

Contd.

No. of house hold	855170	12514414	152,009,467
Literacy Rate – (%)	38.28	57.70	52.21
Male – (%)	46.42	67.81	64.13
Female – (%)	29.57	46.56	39.29
Primary School per lakh people	55.12	65.59	64.94
Middle/high School per lakh people	2.69	3.33	19.72
Primary Health centre per lakh people	1.74	2.09	2.34
Bank Branch per lakh people	3.87	5.53	6.65
Bank deposit Rs. per capita	1477	6345	6967
Bank credit Rs. per capita	404	2753	3816
Credit to agriculture Rs. per capita	89	129	408
Credit to industry Rs. per capita	75	1625	1876
Gross irrigated area (%of GCA, in Hectre)	20.22	27.63	38.45
Value of agricultural product	1883	1584	2370
Telephone – per 100 people	0.92	1.56	2.15
Village electrified – (%)	93.43	77.21	85.95
% of main workers			
Total –	30.05	30.23	34.18
Male –	50.99	50.66	51.00
Female --	7.86	7.96	16.03
% of marginal worker			
Total –	1.46	1.96	3.32
Male –	0.50	0.74	0.61
Female --	2.47	3.29	6.24
% of Non workers			
Total –	68.49	67.81	62.50
Male –	48.51	48.60	48.39
Female –	89.67	88.75	77.73

Source : Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), October 2000 and Census of India, 1991

Political Scenario :

This district has 07 Municipalities, 26 Panchayat Samities, 255 Gram Panchayats. A total of 4159, 700 and 60 seats are there in Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samity and Zilla Parishad respectively. Murshidabad district has 3182977 voters. Among them 1602645 male covering 50.35 % of total voters. Female number is 1580332 covers 49.65% of total voters besides

that this district has a number of 1787 service voter. Murshidabad has a mixed political culture. Comparing the overall percentage of women in PRI (36.27%) is higher than the percentage (35.13%) West Bengal.

Table - 6.2
Election Update : 1998
Dist. Murshidabad

Gram Panchayat	Total Seat	CPI(M)	CPI	RSP	AIFB	INC	WBPMC	BJP	Ind.
	4159	1698	38	339	97	1326	255	274	132
P.S.	700	384	05	57	06	191	31	19	07
Z.P.	60	45	01	04	01	08	---	---	01
M.L.A	18	06	---	04	---	07	---	---	01
M.P.	03	02	---	---	---	01	---	---	---

Source : State Institute of Panchayat and Rural Development (SIPRD), Kalyani, W.B.

Table : 6.3
Main Portfolio and Party Position, Panchayat Election : 1998
Dist. Murshidabad

Portfolio	Total Seat	CPI(M)	CPI	RSP	AIFB	INC	WBPMC	BJP	Ind.
Sabhadhi pati	01	01	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Sahakari Sabhadhi pati	01	---	---	01	---	---	---	---	---
Sabhapati	26	21	---	01	---	04	---	---	---
Sahakari Sabhapati	26	12	02	04	04	03	---	01	---
Pradhan*	255	121	01	15	07	79	07	15	08
UpaPradhan**	255	101	04	24	09	73	15	25	01

Source : State Institute of Panchayat and Rural Development (SIPRD), Kalyani, W.B.

*Election not held for two seats.

** Election not held in three seats.

Table : 6.4

**Woman Position in Top Government Body at all the Three Levels
Dist. Murshidabad :1998**

Description	Total Seat	Male	Female	Male (%)	Female (%)
Pradhan	255	183	72	71.76	28.23
Upa Pradhan	255	184	71	72.15	27.84
Sabhapati	26	18	08	69.23	30.76
Sahakari Sabhapati	26	18	08	69.23	30.76
Sabhadhipati	01	01	00	100	00
Sahakari Sabhadhipati	01	01	00	100	00

Source : *State Institute of Panchayat and Rural Development (SIPRD), Kalyani, W.B.*

**Present Administrative Orrganisations, Murshidabad district Zilla
Parishad.**

(Elected Representatives and Bureaucrats)

1. Sri Sachhidananda Kandari

Sabhadhipati

2. Sri Santosh Halder

Sahakari Sabhadhipati

3. Sri Vivek Kumar

I.A.S

Executive Officer.

4. Sri Ashok Banerjee

W.B.C.S

Addl. Executive Officer.

5. Sri Sachhidananda Kandari

Karmadhaksha, Artha, Sanstha, Unnayan-O-Parikalpana

Sthayee Samiti.

6. Sri Sujay Halder

W.B.C.S

Secretary.

7. Sri Karti Ch.Mandal

Karmadhaksha: Purto Karya-O-Paribahan.

8. Sri Golam Panjaton

Karmadhaksha: Bon-O-Bhumi Sanskar.

9. Sri Badaruddin Seikh

Karmadhaksha: Krishi,Sech-O-Samabay.

10. Sri Kabir Molla

Karmadhaksha: Janaswastha-O-Paribesh.

11. Sri Yadul Islam

Karmadhaksha: Bidyut-O-Achariracharit Sakthi.

12. Smt. Minoti Mukhopadhyay

Karmadhaksha: Khadya-O-Saraboraho.

13. Sri. Mona Mondal

Karmadhaksha: Motsya-O-Prani sampad Bikash.

14. Sri Noor Mohammad

Karmadhaksha: Siksha, Sanskriti, Tathya-O-Kriya.

15. Smt. Kanon Ghosh

Karmadhaksha: Sishu-O-Nari Unnayan,

Janakalyan-O-Tran.

16. Sri. Ujjal Das

Dist. Accounts Officer.

17. Sri. Chanchal Bhattachariya

Statistian

18. Sri. Mihir Sarkar

Executive Engineer(R.D).

19. Sri. Jyotirmoy Chakraborty

Dist. Engineer.

20. Sri. Rupok Kr. Mondal

Asst. Engineer(R.D).

Socio Economic Status of Women Members in Panchayat :

Knowledge of the socio-economic background of a community is an indispensable pre requisite for the understanding of the thought or behaviour of its members. This holds good for all human communities, and more so in the case of rural communities, woman in particular which are intrinsically more traditional in their structure. Religious traditions tend to be observed with rigidity and family as well as caste status play an important role. Generally all members of rural communities, even more in the case of rural woman for whom every step in life is ritually prescribed, leaving a rather small margin for personal choice. In the course of time the phrase came to be constructed in a literal sense with the understanding that a woman deserves independence, that she ought not to do anything on her own initiative right from her childhood, youth and even in her old age. Thus, woman came to occupy an increasingly dependent position in the family, unexposed to social pressure outside the home, the power of family influence tends to get intensified in her case. In today's world family prestige and status are judged according to that of senior male members because they play an important part in the occupational, religious and legal system of society.

Woman in rural areas of district enjoy an ascriptive status, it is necessary to study the status of father and husband in order to appreciate the social position of the rural woman. In spite of the change that is affecting the social structure of rural communities women are still very much under the power of the family. The rural family which is in most cases an agricultural household, is characterised by a greater closeness among its members and thus is more liable to be influenced by hereditary traits and family culture. The social, economic and political involvement of the family is the atmosphere in which the thought and aspirations of the woman are nourished and given the shape. However, the traditional influence of the family is now gradually being offset by other forces at work in rural society. These forces have come into play with the setting up of democratic organisations such as that of Panchayati Raj. The structure of Panchayati Raj has incorporated the ideal of equality in development, riding over

traditional barriers of caste and class to make way for freer participation and greater social mobility among rural communities, particularly in the areas where Muslims are in majority. Given the traditional past in which rural woman have grown up and the process of social change generated by these new channels of development, it is of interest to view the new role that woman Panchayat members are to play.

In order to view the social, economic and political influence we have to look in the husband/parental background and personal background. We can have focus on husband/parent's education, occupation, type of family, economic status and engagement in socio-political activity by the family members.

Education :

Education did not figure high in the socio-cultural life of the land owning class. But the education of parent/husband help to throw light which influences the thought, social aspirations and performance of a family members especially the life. After the compulsory education has become one of the Directive Principles of the constitution, more people are using the facilities of achieving a minimum level of education. The education of the parents/husband is an indication of the process of social change that is taking place in the respondent's families.

Table : 6.5
Educational level of Parents/Husbands

Sl. No.	Level of education	No. of Parents	(%)	No.of Husbands	(%)
1	Illiterate	22	45.8	04	20
2	Primary	12	25	03	15
3	Secondary	10	20.9	05	25
4	Higher Secondary	04	8.3	06	30
5	Graduate	---	--	02	10
6	Post Graduate	---	--	---	---
Total		48	100	20	100

Source : *Compiled from the data collected through Field Survey.*

Table 6.5 shows that above 45 percent of illiteracy among parents are evident in which most of them are mothers. In the case of husband, higher secondary level is an average but illiteracy does not go away, in no case any post graduate is found, which indicates the women belong to a high literacy family are not involving in Panchayat. Table 6.5 presents no post graduate among the respondents. Illiteracy here also does not lag behind 20 percent husband are illiterate and only 10 percent are graduate. The average literacy in middle standard women are mostly found as elected woman Panchayat members in the area surveyed.

Fathers'/Husband's Occupation :

As this district is mainly based on agriculture and having very less number of people in any service, mostly people are engaged in cultivation or small business.

Table 6.6

Main occupation of father and husband

Sl. No.	Occupation	No. of Fathers	No. of Husbands
1	Cultivation	02	08
2	Service	---	04
3	Business	01	07
4	Professional Practice	01	01
Total		04	20

Source : *Compiled from the data collected through Field Survey.*

Table 6.6 shows that only 20% of husbands are engaged in service. Most of them are in cultivation or small business, only 2 has professional practice of quack doctors. The main occupation of the fathers of the respondents alongside that of the husbands merely for comparison sake. It appears no significant change in the occupational status. There are identical number of cultivators on both sides, which shows that in village women are generally married to the same social class of people. The other aspect of note is that some respondents claim

the status of cultivators but all are not daily wage earner, most of them have own agricultural field and other activities also.

Type of Family :

In type family structure, it is easy to distinguish between the joint and nuclear family. The joint family is associated with a traditional, agricultural society where conservatism with religious orthodoxy and family status tend to dominate over individual interest. The small family, more a development of a mobile, industrialised society permits of a greater degree of flexibility and self-expression among its members. The collected data reflects more than 92% family is a nuclear type which indicates a trend of development in ideas and overlooking the religious orthodoxy to some extent. A close view on this, finds some family with higher education and sound economic status has two establishments, one at village another at towns where the husband/father is engaged in service or business or for the better education of their children. One or two woman members are found working in socio-political activities as her husband is staying at town for service, giving more freedom to wife to be activated in such matters, they seem to be more empowered socially.

Economic Status of the Family :

Through an investigation of the main sources of income, the economic status of the family has been studied. In rural areas of this district it is quite impossible to accept these people to talk about their income in actual figures. This problem mainly comes to interview woman panchayat members who in most cases are not quite conversant with family income, and who find it hard to make monetary assessments. Woman are always careful to disclose the real state of one's income or possessions and one may resort to evasive responses.

Table 6.7
Annual family Income (Approx.)

Sl.no.	Level of Income (in Rs.)	No.of Families
1	Up to 25000	06
2	Up to 50000	11
3	Above 50000	07
Total		24

Source : *Compiled from the data collected through Field Survey.*

Table 6.7 indicates an average standard of annual family income of Rs.50,000 (approx). Only 06 families has below the level i.e., upto Rs.25,000 only 07 families has above Rs.50,000 annual income. It shows no such woman member has come out of any high eco standard families, most of them are lower middle standard which is clearly depicted in Table No. 6.2 where the main occupations of father and husbands are identified.

Engagement of Family Members in Socio-Political Activity :

Our survey finds that 17 members had no family members involved in social activities that shows us the non involvement of these family members in any social activities. They keep themselves busy in their daily life not having much exposure to the public life. Whereas 07 members has little or more social involvement. The presence of this group of family where from the woman proves the effectiveness of the status in opening the door to any woman who can work for the development of woman and the community at large. The opportunity of being a Panchayat member can serve as a means of encouraging the growth of leadership among woman who have proved their worth in some way.

The number of political participation among family members seems rather high, because of political awareness among people and party based activities in West Bengal under Left-Front Govt. Out of 24 woman members 22

has their family members involved directly or indirectly in politics. And it is for this reason reservation of seat for woman have been filled mostly by their woman, a few percent of woman may be illiterate but got the chance to be elected as because of caste reservation or muscle power which indirectly influenced the political leaders to opt for these choice. The foregoing data and analysis on the socio-political involvement of family members permits broad generalisations which can indicate the level of political influence in the family. It has been focussed that the involvement of family members is mainly political while motivation for social service is secondary and even identical.

Table 6.8
Political Involvement of Family Members

Sl. No.	Involvement	No. of family	Percentage (%)
1	High	06	25
2	Medium	11	45.83
3	Low	05	20.83
4	Nil	02	08.34
Total		24	100

Source : *Compiled from the data collected through Field Survey.*

Table 6.8 shows that 25% belong to such families having high level of political involvement, whereas a maximum 45% has medium level of involvement and very less 20.8% has not involved directly in politics but it is not to be wrong to identify these families as passive participants in politics. It cannot be denied that education does contribute towards the growth of political involvement among individuals in a rural community.

This district having illiterate masses are at a disadvantage and a look up to the educated minority for help. This disparity arises from economic status also be leveled if the task of education could be undertaken with greater seriousness so as to allow the more disadvantaged groups to use the facilities available for the gaps.

Personal Background of Respondents (Women Panchayat Members):

This para examines the particular socio-cultural situation in the life of the individual respondent, which may or may not have helped her to fulfill the role she is called to play through membership in democratic decentralised institutions.

The tradition in rural area, which continued for such many long years was upbringing of a girl towards marriage as soon as she reaches maturity. Early domestic burden and even unhappy widow existence was considered to be burden unless these women proved to be meaningful and useful asset of the family.

The rural socio-cultural picture is now in the process of change. Though women education, marriage at advanced age, small family is no longer frowned upon, but this district bearing old cultural heritage is still footing on the same old track. The probe in to the personal background of the respondent also seeks to find out the extent to which the changing social pattern helps women in the social and domestic role they have given to play as members in Panchayati Raj system have been studied.

Age :-

From the collected data the mean age of the respondents is 35 years which indicates the initiative of the women at this age group. It is seen that 25% of the respondent falls between 18 – 25 years, 45% of them falls up to 35 years and nearly 37% falls up to the age of 45 years, which clearly indicates the involvement of middle aged women. Of course it is obvious that higher age group women are not interested to be involved in politics but because of family position they got the chance to be elected on behalf of their family members but at the lower age women they are involved in politics since their schooling and they come forward on their own potentiality, since the high percentage of

middle aged up to 35 came as the wife of some active politicians. Though 45 percent tends to be more involved in politics but it must be recognised that, a fairly sizable group of younger women has also emerged. There it is found a sign of change from the traditional attitude which tended to keep younger women a way from the public life of village.

Marital Status :-

As found earlier young girls were inevitably oriented towards child marriage. Present social structure is changing but this area still has, though not child marriage but early marriage. Here we got 79 percent respondent are married, they married at early age which caused most of them having 3-4 children, among the married respondents widow member is 2, and count for only 8 percent of the total sample, who have been the victims of political riots. Those who are married at higher age are generally more educated than the average respondent. Thus one finds that the respondents are mothers with domestic burden as housewife.

Education :-

The educational level of the respondent can be viewed from the table below :

Table : 6.9

Educational Level of Respondents (Women Panchayat Member)

Sl No	Level	No. of Respondent	Percentage
01	Illiterate	03	12.7
02	Below secondary	07	29
03	Upto Higher	12	50
04	Secondary	02	8.3
	Graduate		
	Total	24	100

Source : *Compiled from the data collected through Field Survey.*

The Table 6.9 brings out the spectacular rise in literacy and education among the respondents up to Higher Secondary level, but yet 12.7 % of them are still marked as illiterate, only 8.3% came up to graduation. The largest group among the respondent came from the middle class family even the 02 graduate respondent also belongs to middle class eco standard family having a outward positive thinking of the family member and are to be married at latter age. Illiteracy still found 01 from the daily wage earner family, another 02 are old aged. Though most recent studies on the status of women tend to decry the low status of women measured among other factors, by low figures of progress in literacy and education, the present study strikes a note of optimism and appreciation at the progressive change observed in the educational level of rural women within the space of a generation.

Political Involvement :-

Collected sample of 24 women Panchayet member as respondent, divulged their political interest and involvement as most of them contested the election for the first time, only 3 member was elected earlier also, which falls under 12.5 percent. There also a clear opinion among certain women members that during her first tenure she was not spread from household job by their family head but now she is quite free from domestic burden. Most of the women members falling 87.5 percent does not know much about politics, neither they involve nor given the chance to understand the tricks of politics it is their male partner or even party who guide them to sign on the papers. They opined that they are interested and they can run the show if they are allowed to do so, they are do not hide to say that they are not being respected by the society much better after they became the Panchayat representatives, by the common people and at home as well. This social respect causes their upliftment and so called social empowerment to some extent, if not up to the desired level. These women respondent mostly 80% now has been able to come out from religious

orthodoxy and found themselves not much suppressed by family members because of political reservation for women at Panchayat tiers.

By way of summerising the findings in the socio-economic background of women Panchayat members of the area surveyed in district Murshidabad. It appears, while participation in the Panchayat structure is open to all, education and family involvement in politics seems to have become a qualification at the point of entry. It also has been seen husband's education and political affiliation is an important component of the factors which make for the influence of the women members where husbands do not figure, as in the case of widow and unmarried girl, even a low standard of education is enough to enable such women to be member and to act on behalf of her political party leaders. This survey has shown the dominance of traditional symbols of status in the selection of women representatives at Panchayati Raj institutions, it has also highlighted the positive effect of the statute in involving women in varied castes, socio-economic classes, education and personal abilities to make a definite contribution in the rural set up.

Murshidabad Zilla Parishad and Various Programmes :-

Food for work (FFW) Programme was the first governmental effort for job assurance of the people living below poverty line. This Programme was working for the year 1977-78 to 1980. During this period two major post flood reconstruction was done under this Programme.

After Panchayati Raj came into effect; National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) started from 15 December 1980 and was continued up to the year 1988-89. This programme was divided into two parts 'Normal' and 'Big'. In normal sector a total Rs. 11 crores 27 lakh and 12332 metric ton food grain was used, 79 lakh mandays was created. In Big sector Rs. 4 crores 27 lakhs and 1637 metric ton food grains was used, 79 mandays was created with NREP and other programme. Rural Landless Employment generation Programme was launched in 1983- this programme was also came to a halt in 1988-89.

Table : 6.10**Achievement of IRDP in Murshidabad district**

Year	Person Benefited	Male	Female	Male %	Female %
1992-93	16,977	10,080	6,897	59.37	40.63
1993-94	13,358	10,720	2,638	80.25	19.75
1994-95	15,445	12,665	2,780	82.01	17.99
1995-96	13,627	10,607	3,020	77.84	22.16
1996-97	9,091	5,751	3,320	63.40	36.60
1997-98	6,802	3,808	2,994	56.99	43.01
1998-99	4,507	2,454	2,053	54.50	45.50
Total	79,787	56,385	23,702	67.62	32.38

Source : DRDA, Murshidabad.

Scheme converted into – Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY).

Table : 6.11**Achievements of TRYSEM in Murshidabad District**

Year	Target	Fund allocated (Rs. In Lakh)	Person benifited	Male with %	Female with %
1994-95	1006	28.17	957	697 (72.83)	260 (27.17)
1995-96	1010	25.25	1455	1094 (75.18)	361 (24.82)
1996-97	1116	25.00	1650	766 (46.48)	884 (53.52)
1997-98	800	18.11	1089	626 (57.48)	463 (42.52)
1998-99	650	13.12	720	564 (78.33)	156 (21.67)
Total	4582	109.65	5871	3847 (66.06)	2124 (33.94)

Source : - DRDA, Murshidabad

Scheme converted into : - Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY).

A total of Rs 7 crore 95 lakh and 8160 metric ton food grain consumed in RLEGP, causing 33 lakh 40 thousand mandays. From the year 1989-90 this two N.R.E.P. and R.L.E.G.P together reemerges as Jawhar Rojgar Yojana (JRY), its three part as Indira Awas Yojana (IAY), Million Wells Schemes (MWS) and JRY. The first two parts were executed under Zilla Parishad and 80% of the third scheme was executed by the Village Panchayat with 20% support from Zilla Parishad. Up to 1994-95 total Rs 61 crores 14 lakhs was allotted but Rs 59 crore was expended creating 1 crore 32 lakhs mandays.

Besides JRY, Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) was launched in 1993-94. This scheme is being executed as the Programme JRY. It can be said that without TRYSEM, DWCRA IRDP only Rural Employment Schemes in this district has created 2 crores 71 lakhs mandays expending 91 crores os rupees. Table 6.10 shows that in the scheme IRDP instead of a target of 40% reserve for women average 32.38% only has been achieved from 1992-93 to 1998-99. 79787 persons has been benefited including 23702 women. Table 6.11 presents us the data that average 33.94% covered by women whereas in this programme also 40% was reserved for women. From 1994-95 to 1998-99 total fund has been released as Rs. 109.65 lakh and 5871 person has been trained including 2124 women. Table 6.12 shows that in no year the women beneficiaries has covered the percentage of 30% as targeted for them. A maximum of 29.32 has been achieved, a minimum of 16.64 also is in the table. It is agreed by OC development, district Murshidabad that suitable women group or person is not coming out in this scheme because of this religious orthodoxy and illiteracy. As so the Govt target is not being fulfilled.

Table – 6.12
Achievements of JRY, EAS, and JGSY in Murshidabad district

Year	Project/Scheme	Fund in lakhs		Total fund	Expenditure (Rs. in Lakhs)	Mandays (in Lakh)			Male %	Female %
		Opening balance	Alloted			Male	Female	Total		
1995-96	JRY	158.48	1286.98	1445.56	1445.46	14.95	5.40	20.35	73.46	26.54
	EAS	89.44	325.00	414.44	376.75	4.20	1.74	5.94	70.70	29.30
1996-97	JRY	—	510.60	510.60	259.04	2.82	1.17	3.99	70.68	29.32
	EAS	37.69	450.00	487.69	343.14	3.78	1.51	5.29	71.45	28.55
1997-98	JRY	251.56	403.81	655.37	381.01	3.69	1.42	5.11	72.21	27.79
	EAS	144.55	706.75	851.30	257.05	2.46	0.97	2.43	71.72	28.28
1998-99	JRY	274.36	359.63	633.99	526.19	4.75	1.66	6.41	74.10	25.90
1999-00	EAS	594.25	600.25	1194.50	473.93	4.36	1.69	6.05	72.06	22.16
	JRY	112.69	141.00	253.69	169.72	1.44	0.41	1.85	77.84	22.16
	EAS	722.87	572.99	1295.86	832.39	8.22	1.64	9.86	83.36	16.64
	JGSY	—	700.29	700.29	226.50	2.27	0.05	2.32	97.84	2.16

Source : - OC development, Murshidabad Zilla Parishad

Table – 6.13
Achievements of DWCRA in Murshidabad district

Year	Target group	Achieved	Person benefited	Expenditure (in Rs)	Fund given @
1993-94	50	31	465	349600.00 (23 paid)	15200
1994-95	156	08	120	182400.00 (12 paid)	15200
1995-96	100	02	30	15200.00 (01 paid)	15200
1996-97	52	85	1168	465000.00 (31 paid)	15000
1997-98	100	114	1543	810000.00 (54 paid)	15000
1998-99	50	32	445	420000.00 (28 paid)	15000
Total	508	272	3771	242200.00	

Source : - DRDA, Murshidabad.

Scheme converted into : - Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY)

Table 6.13 presents us the achievements of DWCRA a *cent* percent women project, here also we find in no year the target was achieved, total 508 group was targeted where only 3771 women in 272 group has been benefited costing expenditure of Rs 2,42,200 lakh. These are the main Schemes/Programmes were executed in this district along with many other small sub schemes. It is seen from this table that during the year 1994-95, the target was 156, but achievement was only 8, whereas during the year 1997-98, target was 100, but achievement was 114 and 1543 person were benefited.

Analysing the achievements in development during 1947-1978 a long innings of 31 years was not as much as was achieved in 22 years during 1978-2000. Villages in this districts has been developed People's awareness has been increased because of the process of democratic decentralisation.

Table : 6.14
Panchayat Election : 1993, Murshidabad district scenario

Tier	Total Seat	Contesting Candidates			Won	
		Male with (%)	Female with (%)	Total	Male with (%)	Female with (%)
G.P.	5245	13569 (70.44)	5694 (29.56)	19263	3402 (64.86)	1843 (35.15)
P.S.	761	1980 (70.26)	838 (29.74)	2818	509 (66.88)	252 (33.12)
Z.P.	52	182 (68.16)	85 (31.84)	267	25 (48.08)	27 (51.92)

Source : - State Institute of Panchayat and Rural Development, Kalyani, West Bengal.

Table : 6.15
Panchayat Election : 1998, Murshidabad district scenario

Tier	Total Seat	Contesting Candidates			Won	
		Male with (%)	Female with (%)	Total	Male with (%)	Female with (%)
G.P.	4159	9666 (67.69)	4612 (32.31)	14278	2676 (64.34)	1483 (35.66)
P.S.	700	1525 (66.47)	769 (33.43)	2294	421 (60.14)	279 (39.86)
Z.P.	60	176 (67.17)	86 (32.83)	262	40 (66.66)	20 (33.34)

Source : - State Institute of Panchayat and Rural Development, Kalyani, West Bengal.

Table : 6.16
Crime against women registered in District Magistrate Office
(Women Cell), Murshidabad

Year	Social (%)	Econo- mical (%)	Political (%)	Total	Religion			Total
					Hindu (%)	Muslim (%)	Others (%)	
1995	76 (66.6)	38 (33.4)	---	114	65 (57)	49 (43)	---	114
1996	105 (67.3)	51 (32.7)	—	156	74 (47.43)	82 (52.57)	—	156
1997	75 (56.8)	57 (43.2)	—	132	69 (52.3)	63 (47.7)	—	132
1998	95 (65.98)	49 (34.02)	—	144	75 (52)	69 (48)	—	144
1999	117 (63.24)	68 (36.76)	—	185	139 (75.1)	46 (24.9)	—	185
2000	167 (62.3)	101 (37.7)	—	268	188 (70.14)	80 (29.86)	—	268
Total	634 (63.46)	364 (36.44)	—	999	610 (61.06)	389 (38.94)	—	999

Source : *Women Cell, District Magistrate Office, Berhampore, Murshidabad.*

Comparing the Table 6.14 and 6.15 it is observed that womens involvement in Panchayat election 1998 has been increased as to the election 1993. In Z.P. 31.84, P.S. 29.74 and G.P. 29.56 percent women contested in Panchayat Election, but in 1998 Election, 32.83 in Z.P., 33.43 in P.S., and 32.31 in G.P. has contested the election and own in percentage of seat as 35.66 in Z.P., 39.86 in P.S., 33.34 in G.P., which indicates more than the reservation (33%) quota women awareness, willingness and involvement has been increased. It is also noticed that in Table 6.16, data of crime against women clearly indicates that among Hindu women, awareness of reporting the case in District Headquarter

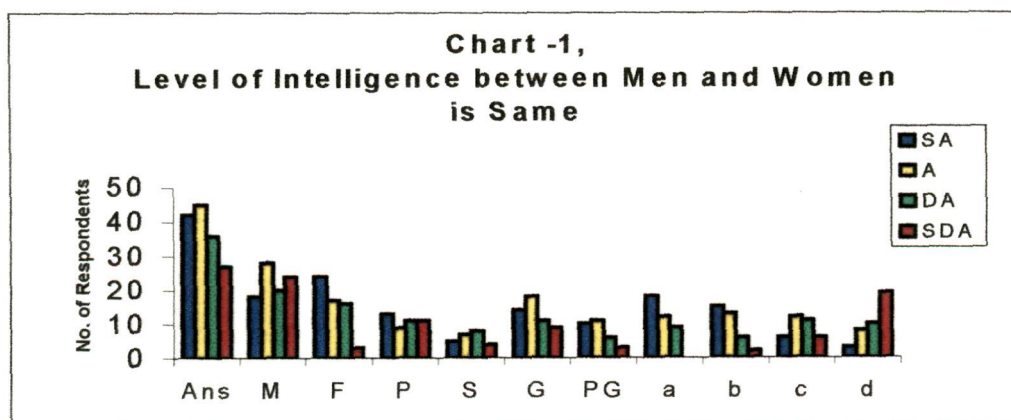
has been constantly increased whereas though this District has a majority of Muslim, but Muslim women awareness has not been increased in average 61.06 percentage cases has been reported by Hindu women and only 38.94 percentage by Muslim women which clearly indicates that awareness among Muslim women is yet to be increased.

Data Analysis:

The informations collected from 150 respondents – both men and women of various categories have been analysed, to find out their views on women empowerment. Among the total 150 respondents, 60 percent (90) are male and 40 percent (60) are female; 26 percent (39) belong to the age group of 18-25, 24 percent (36) belong to the age group of 26-35, 23.3 percent (35) from 36-50 age group and the rest 26.7 percent (40) came from the age 51 and above. In terms of the level of education, 29.3 percent (44) are at primary, 16 percent (24) are at secondary level, 34.7 percent (52) are graduate and 20 percent (30) are the post-graduate.

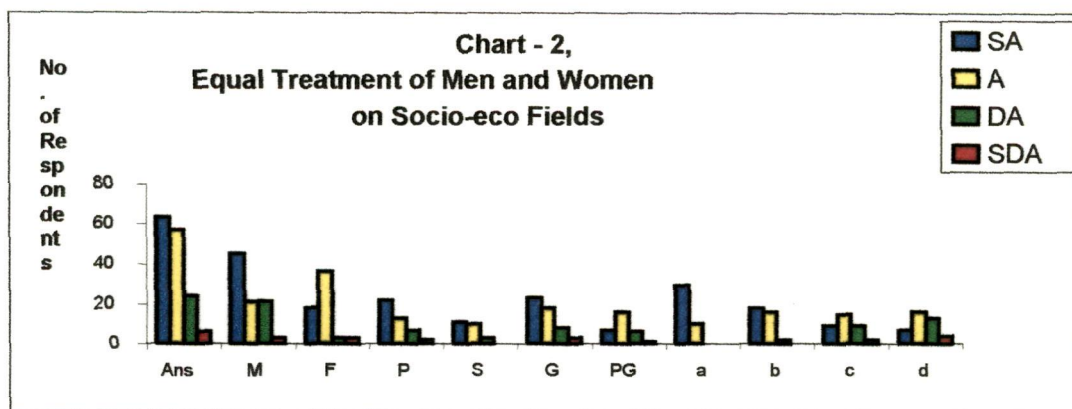
The socio-economic and political variable wise attitude of the respondents show the following findings:

[M= Male, F= Female, SA= Strongly agree, A= Agree, DA= DisAgree, SDA= Strongly DisAgree. Age Group 18-25=A, 26-35=B, 36-50=C, 51 and above=D; Primary=P, Secondary=S, Graduate=G, Post-Graduate=PG.]



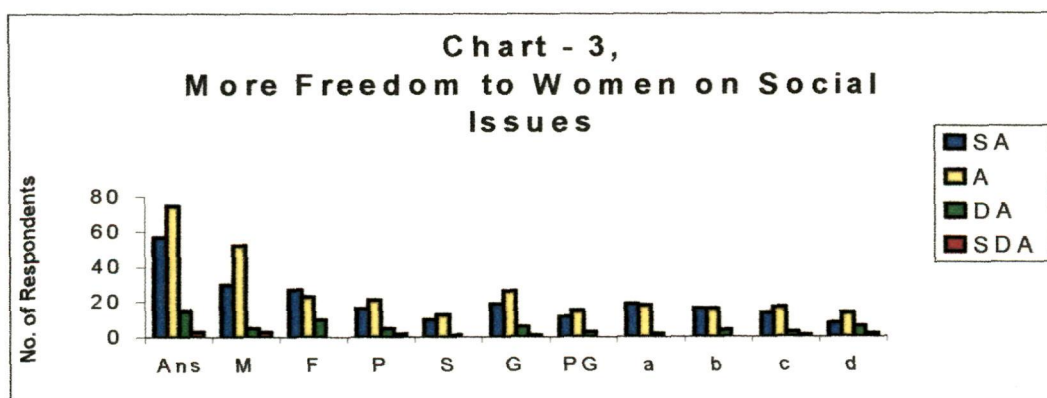
Source :- Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey

In Chart 01, we find 28 percent (42) of the respondents has a strong positive view towards the level of intelligence of women, 30 percent (45) also has a positive idea upon women but 24 percent (36) has a negative view and 18 percent (27) have strong negative view towards women on the same questions. It is found that among the respondents who hold negative view 19.3 percent (29) belong to the age group of 51 and above with a low level of education but those who hold positive view 14 percent (21) respondents are post-graduate and most of them at lower age groups.



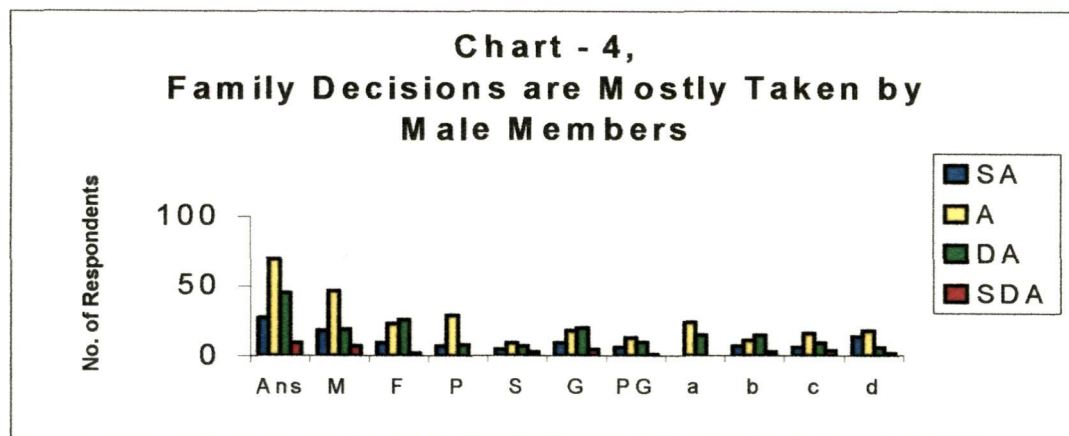
Source :- Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey

Chart 02 shows that 42 percent (63) of the total respondent have strongly agreed on equal treatment of women in socio-eco fields, 38 percent (57) have also agreed to the same question but 16 percent (24) have not agreed and left over 4 percent (6) respondents have strongly disagreed. Among 30 of the respondents with negative DA/SDA view on equal treatment of women, 27 came from the age group above 50 years, out of 120 respondents who favoured equal treatment of women, 54 are women and 73 of them are below the age of 35 year indicating the favourable attitude among new generation people.



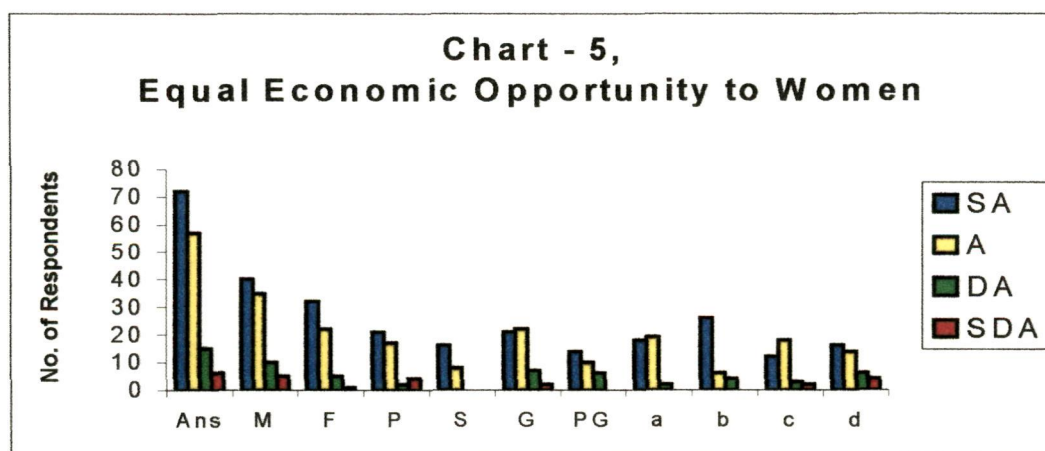
Source :- Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey

Chart 03 shows that 38 percent (57) of the total respondents strongly agreed for more freedom of women in social issues and with 50 percent (75) respondents also agreeing; but 10 percent (15) respondents did not agree, whereas, only 2 percent of them strongly opposed the idea. Mostly old aged respondents have opposite idea but the respondents belonging to younger age favoured the idea of more freedom for women.



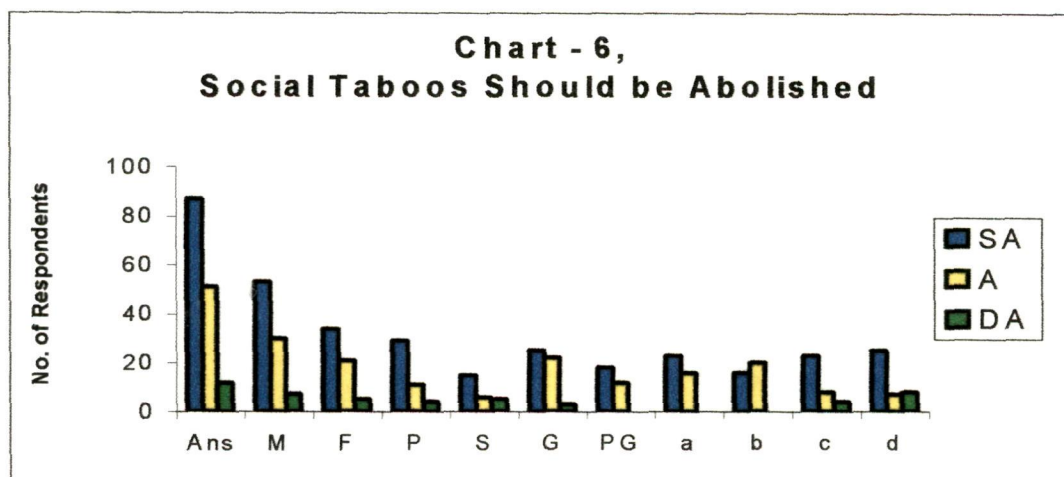
Source :- Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey

From Chart 04, it is found that 64 percent (96) respondents have agreed that, family decisions are taken by male members; 30 percent (45) did not agree and only 6 percent (9) has strongly disagreed. Most of the respondents with negative view have high level of education and come from low age group females, these women bear the capability of shouldering the responsibility in family decisions. But 32 female respondents belonging to old age group and low level of education showed their preference towards male members in respect of family decisions.



Source :- Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey

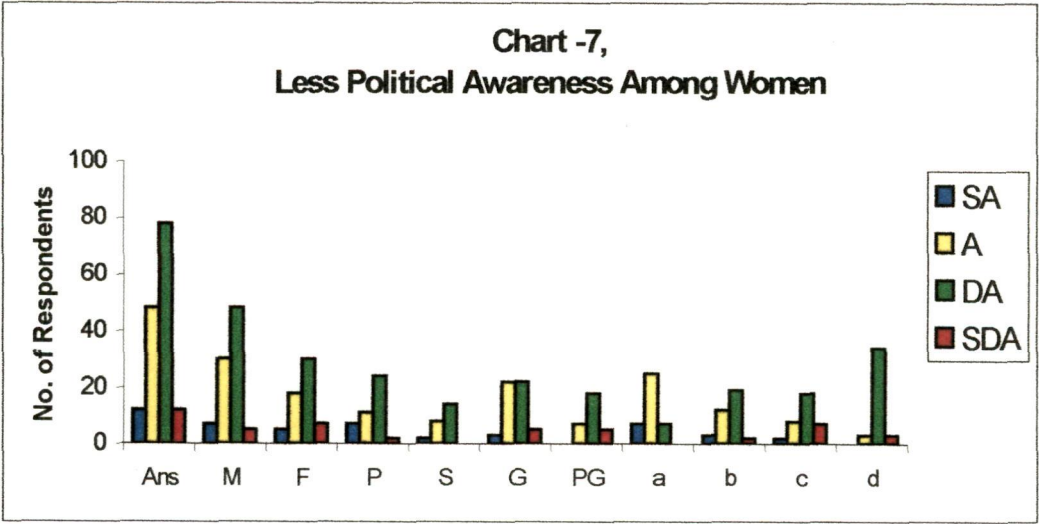
On the question of equal economic opportunity to women, Chart 05 shows that 86 percent (129) respondents have opined in favour, 10 percent (15) have not agreed and only 4 percent have strongly opposed the question. It is noticed that more educated and low age group female respondents have showed their opinion in favour of equal economic opportunity for women. 43 graduates and 24 post-graduates have favoured for equal economic opportunity; while 69 respondents below 35 years of age showed their favourable attitude towards the question.



Source :- Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey

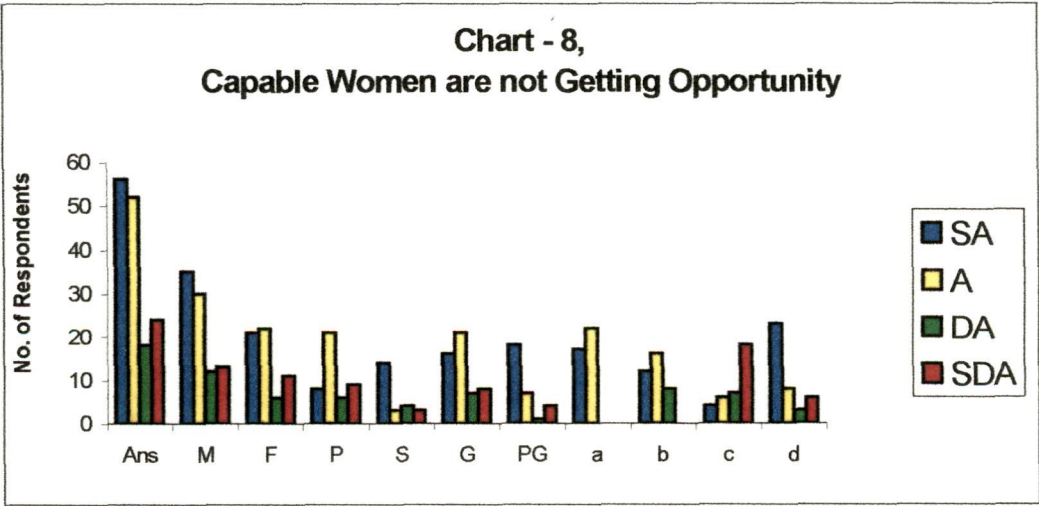
In Chart 06, 92 percent (138) respondents have agreed on abolition of social taboos, whereas, 8 percent (12) of the total respondents show an opposite view. Here, cent percent post graduate and 47 graduates want abolition of social taboos. It is also noticed that respondents with religious orthodoxies and low level of education still believe in social taboos but mostly women respondents and educated respondents realise the bad impact of social taboos on social development and women empowerment in particular.

Chart 07 reveals the opinion on political awareness of women. Among 150 respondents 40 percent (60) showed a negative position but 60 percent (90) respondents have a positive position; of them, primary and secondary level respondents are more in number and 62 of them are at the age above 35 years.

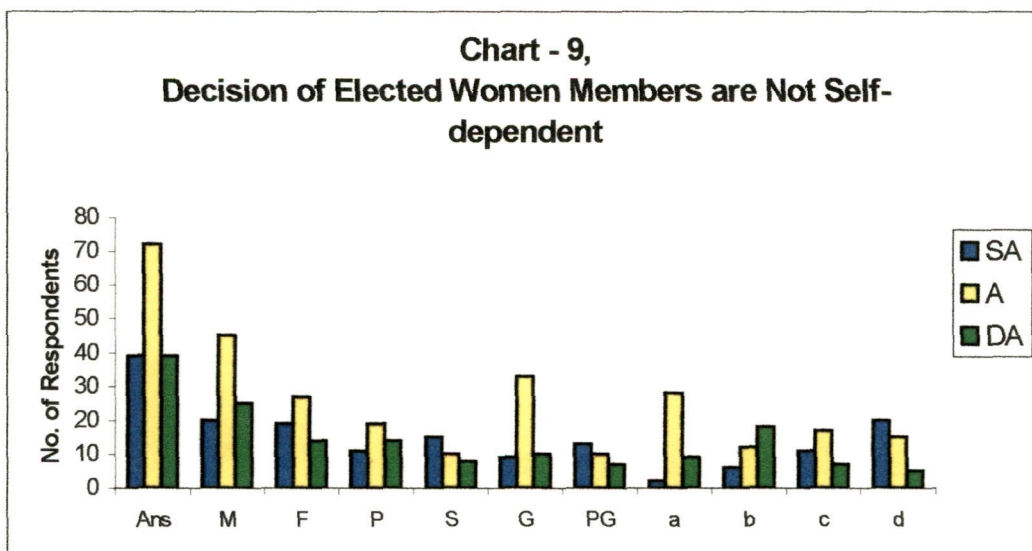


Source :- *Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey*

From Chart 08, it is found that among 150 respondents, 72 percent (108) respondents have agreed that women are not getting opportunity, 28 percent (42) of the total respondents do not agree with them. in this chart, it is found that, graduate and post-graduate respondents are more in number to agree with the view that women are not getting opportunity, these high percentages respondent make us clear that if the women are given the opportunity they can utilise it. Respondents, who belong to the other categories, are mostly at the age above 35 years but only 8 are at the age group of 26-35 years.

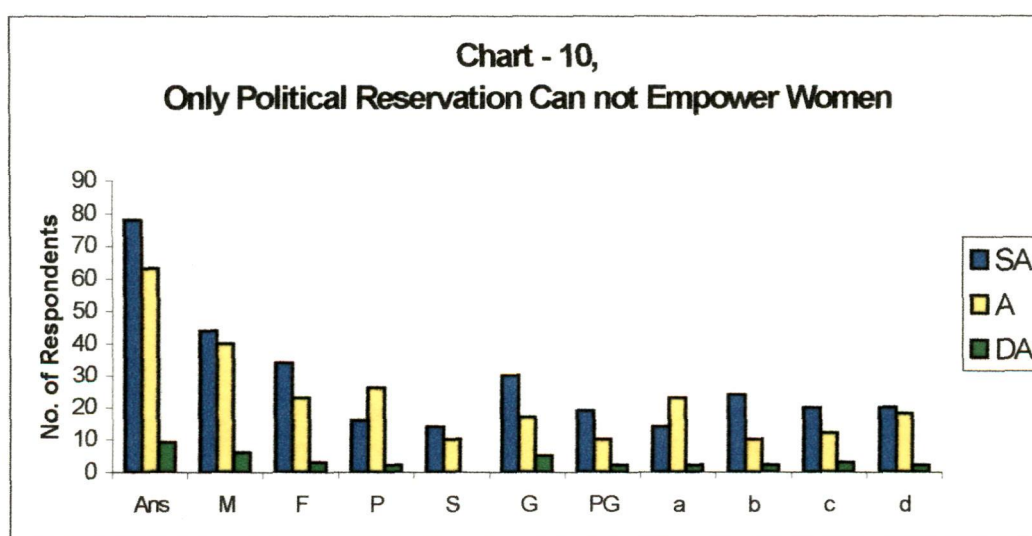


Source :- *Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey*



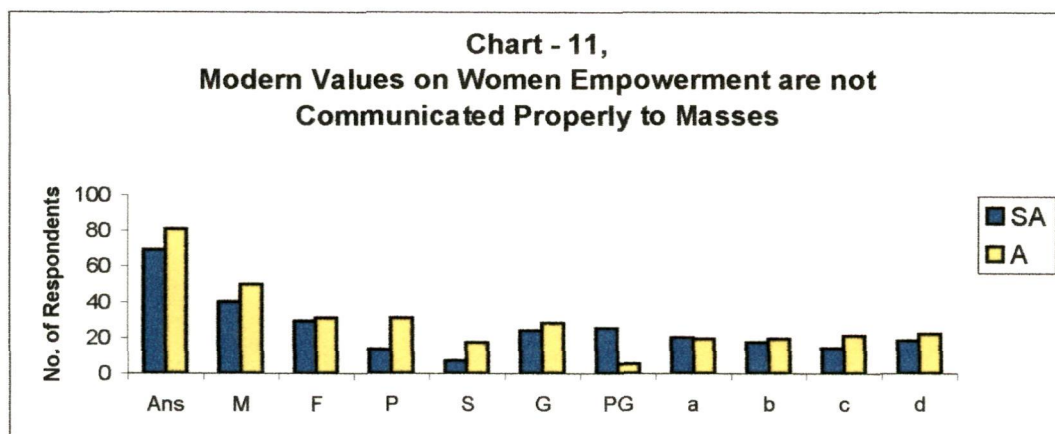
Source: *Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey.*

The distribution in Chart 09 shows that, 74 percent (111) of the total respondents shared on the dependents of elected women Panchayat members on party leaders or family heads, in this, 23 post-graduate and 43 graduate respondents with age mostly 30 and above shown that women Panchayat members are dependent, whereas, rest 26 percent (39) respondent aged below 35 years and under graduates disagreed to the view that women Panchayat members are depending on family heads or party heads.



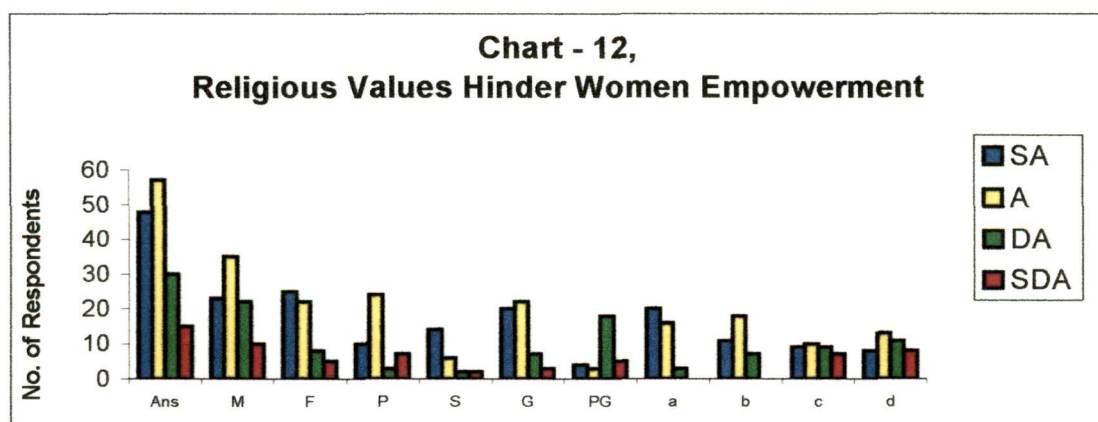
Source :- *Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey*

From Chart 10, the findings show that 94 percent (141) of the total respondents believe that only political reservation cannot empower women. These 141 respondents represent all the age groups and all educational levels. Only 6 percent (9) have disagreed with the other 141 respondents. These 94 percent respondents are of the view that besides political reservation women should be given more socio-economic opportunity to be empowered.



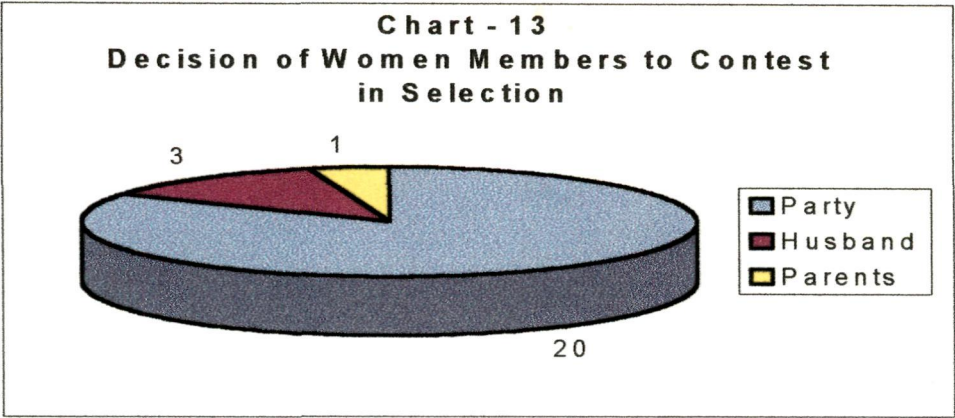
Source :- *Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey*

Chart 11 reveals that all the 150 respondents agreed or strongly agreed on the statement that modern values on women empowerment are not properly communicated to the mass. In this respect, it is learned that everyone is aware that the modern values are not reaching to the rural people. Government and Non-Government Organisations are to take initiatives to make the rural mass aware of modern values or latest government policies on women empowerment.



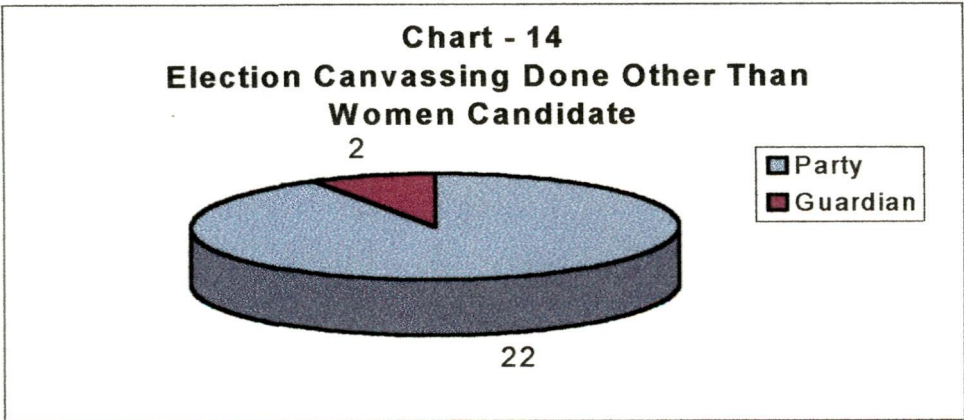
Source :- *Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey*

Chart 12 shows that 70 percent (105) of the total respondents believe that religious values come in the way of women empowerment. These respondents belong to all age groups but as far as level of education is concerned, mostly half of them are at primary or secondary levels, few old aged higher educated respondents do not believe in religious hindrance.



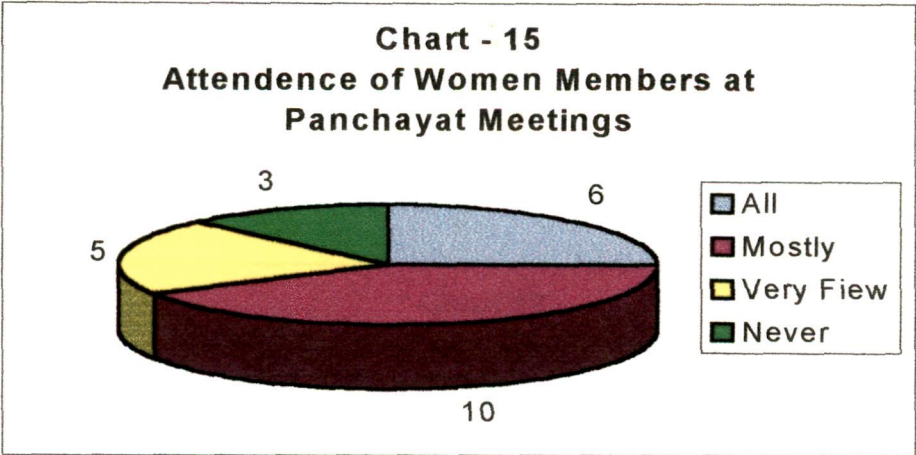
Source :- *Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey*

Further analysing the collected 24 women elected representatives as our respondents, we find in Chart 13 that none has taken self decision to participate in election, 83.3 percent respondents (20) participated on Party decision and only 02 were decided by Husband/guardian, which indicates political noninvolvement or less awareness among women and dependence on male members of the family or political party.



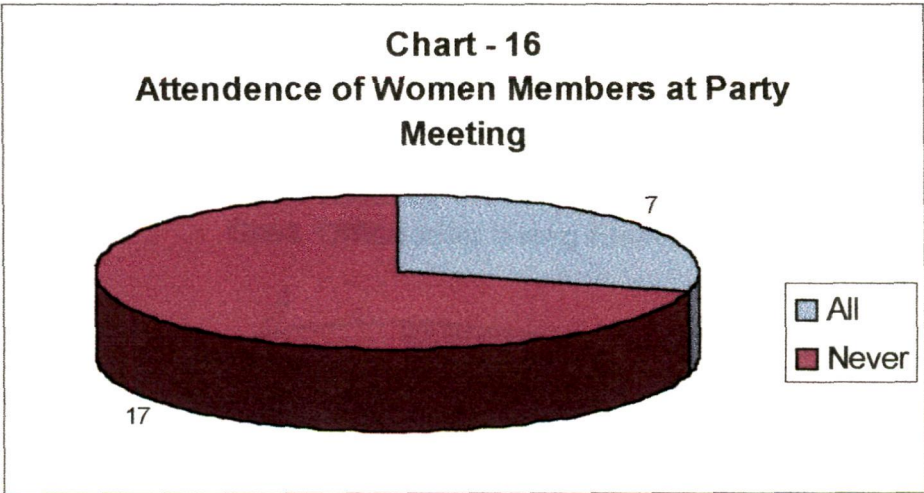
Source :- *Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey*

It is found from the Chart 14 that election canvassing was done by Husband /guardian only in the case of 8.4 percent (2) and rest 91.6 percent (22) was done by Party indicating dominance over election functioning by the party.



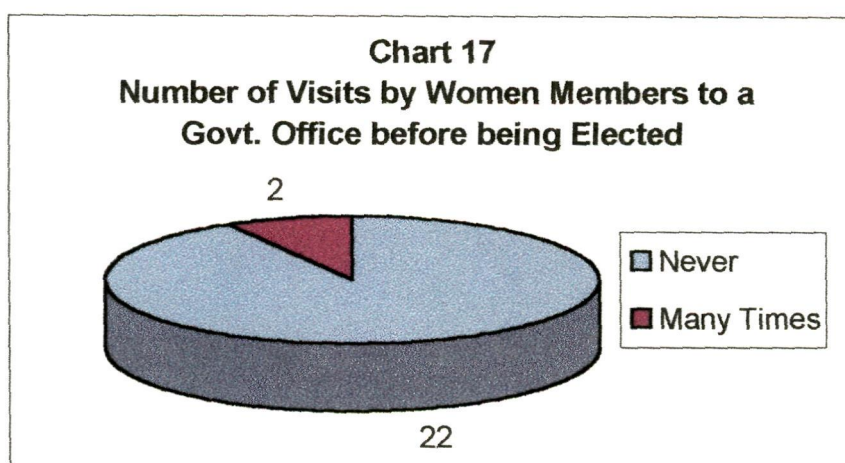
Source :- *Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey*

Chart 15 shows that 6 members had attended all the Panchayat meetings, 41.6 percent of them (10) has attended mostly but 20.8 percent (5) has attended very few whereas 15.5 percent (3) has never attended body meetings. It indicates male supremacy over women members not only at home but also in Panchayat bodies. Panchayat functions are done by the party or family head, which indicates a controlled political empowerment of women.



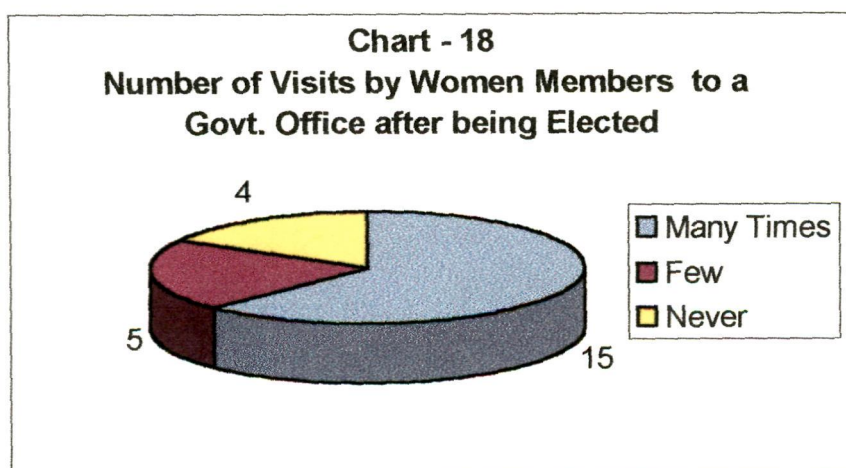
Source :- *Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey.*

In Chart 16 we got the Picture that in the case of Party meetings 25 percent (6) respondents had attended cent percent Party meetings whereas 70.8 percent (17) had never attended any such Party meetings, which clearly shows us that decisions are taken by Party only. Here it is not only women Panchayat members are not willing or interested to join party meeting but are not given the chance to join by the family, as they considered the decision of the male members of the family is the decision of the women member.



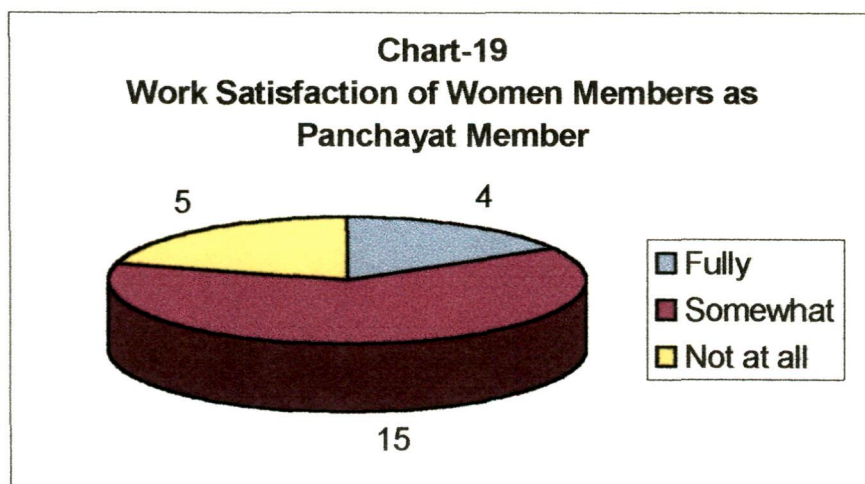
Source :- Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey

In Chart 17 the number of respondents is 91.6 percent (22) who never visited to a Government office before being elected but only 8.3 percent (2) has done so which indicates women's non attachment with Government functionaries



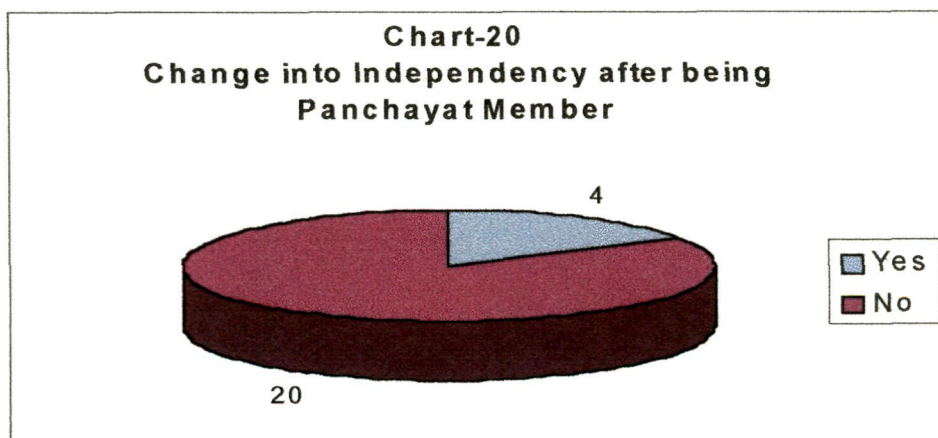
Source :- Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey

Chart 18 shows that after being elected 16.6 percent respondents (4) never visited to a Govt. office where 20.8 percent (5) has visited 3-4 times, and 62.5 percent (15) has visited many times as required. This chart reveals an upcoming tendency to visit the government office by women after being elected as Panchayat members.



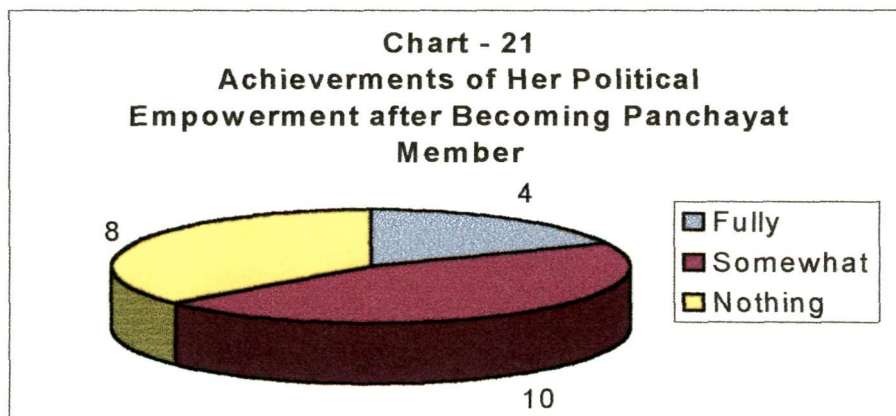
Source :- *Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey*

Chart 19 shows us that out of total 24 women elected members as respondents 16.6 percent (4) has work satisfaction, 62.5 percent (15) are somewhat satisfied and 20.8 percent (5) not at all satisfied with their performance. Here it indicates that women members are not getting opportunity to utilise their full empowerment in decentralised governance as self-decision makers.



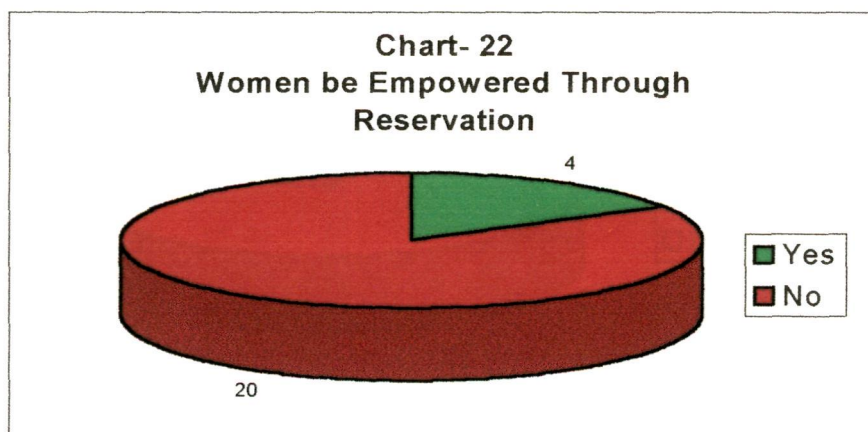
Source :- *Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey*

In Chart 20, only 4 respondents has agreed that their economic independency has changed after being elected but 83.4 percent (20) has not such change. This is observed that only political reservation is not enough to empower women particularly in their economic spheres of life.



Source :- *Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey*

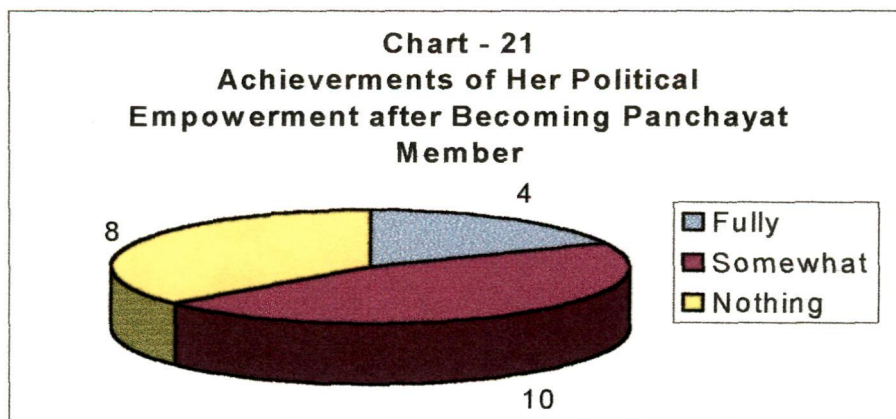
Chart 21 shows that 4 respondents finds her politically empowered, 13.8 percent of them (10) feels somewhat empowered but 33.4 percent (8) feel they do nothing but working on behalf of Party /guardians.



Source :- *Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey*

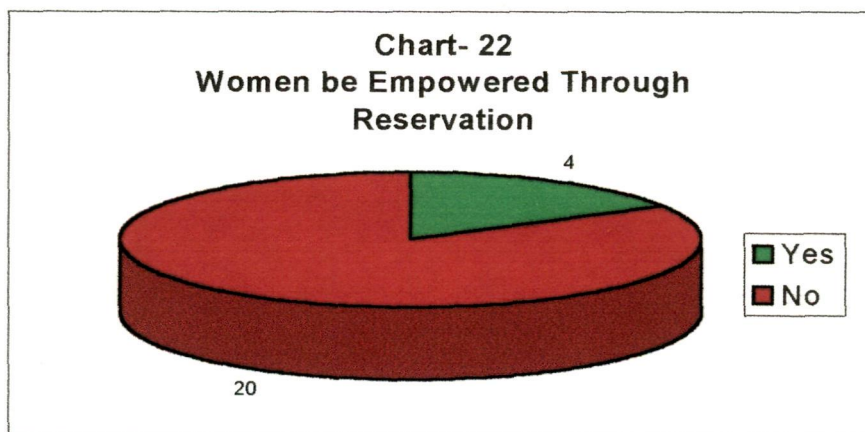
In Chart 22, the distribution shows that 83.4 percent respondents (20) feels women empowerment is not possible through only reservation in Panchayati Raj, 16.6 percent (4) of them feels it is a onward step and can be possible. A high percentage women members feel reservation is not the only means for women empowerment.

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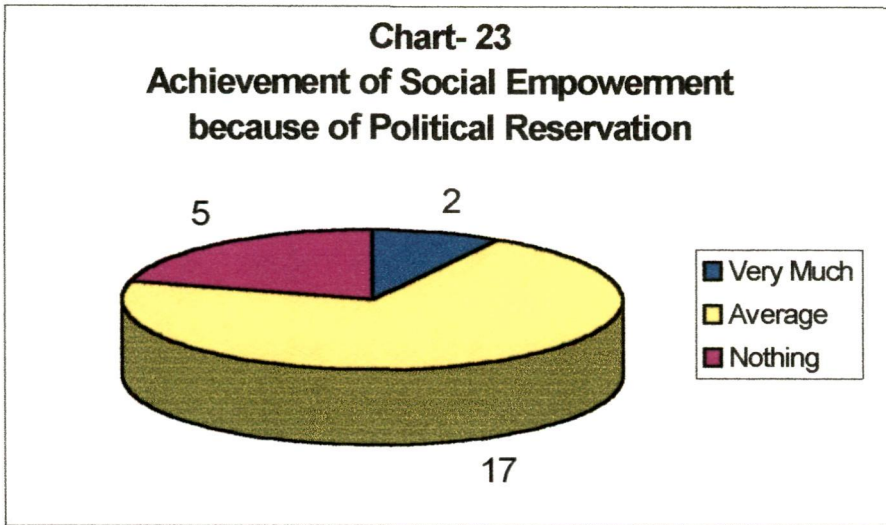
Source :- Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey

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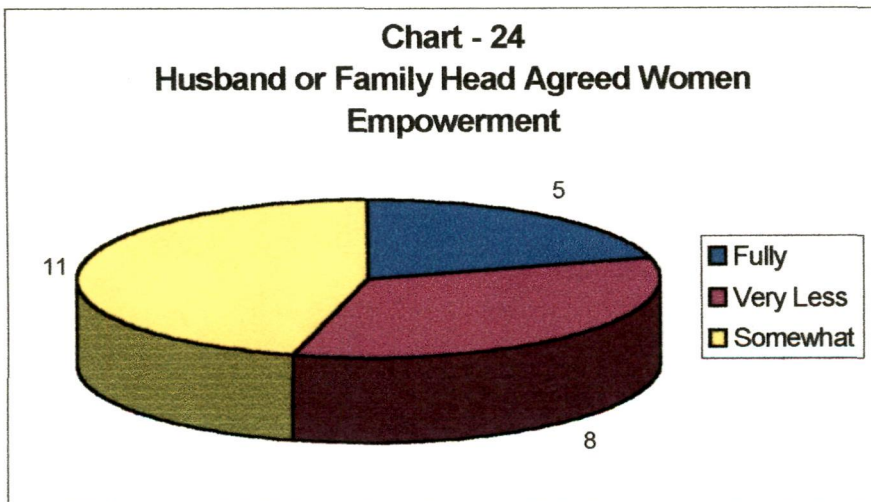
Source :- Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey

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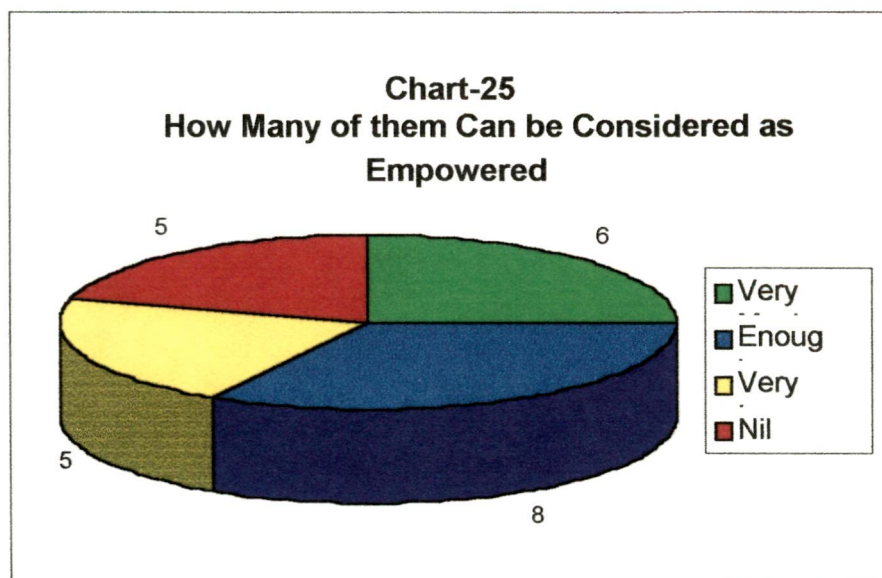
Source :- *Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey*

Chart 23 shows only 8.4 percent (2) respondents feel them socially empowered, 70.8 percent (17) show a range of average and 20.8 percent (5) have no such empowerment. Though only 8.4 percent of the total respondents are socially empowered but the maximum of them are not acquired such social empowerment. It is evident that only reservation in Panchayati Raj bodies will not enliven the process of women empowerment. Women empowerment is the overall development, requires full support all the way.



Source :- *Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey*

In Chart 24, only 20.8 percent respondents (5) feel that their husband / family agrees to women empowerment, 45.8 percent of them (11) feel somewhat their case is upcoming but 33.4 percent (8) feel no change in attitude of their husband / family. It is evident from this chart that still male members at home do not favour women empowerment.



Source :- *Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey*

In Chart 25, we came to a conclusion that 25 percent (6) of the respondents can be considered empowered in the degree of very much 33.4 percent (8) respondents can be said enough, 20.8 percent (5) very less and 20.8 percent (5) has been nil degree of empowerment. Though nil degree of women empowerment still exists, but there is a possibility for upcoming trend as 25 percent of the women Panchayat members (respondents) found them empowered.

To sum up, it can be said that this district is still lagging behind expected empowerment. Though the religious influence is coming down but still it can not be denied that religious faith hinders the process of women empowerment. There is a high expectation among women of new generation to gear up the process of empowerment and besides various Governmental Plans, self awareness is witnessed to enliven the idea. Though it is a long time to come but there is not only a possibility but certainly will gather the momentum.

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